

### **AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

#### **Claims:**

What is claimed is:

1. Canceled.
2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein a laboratory prepared sample of said fluid comprising said polymer has a Stress Build Index in the range of about 1 to about 2 at 120°F.
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein a laboratory prepared sample of said fluid comprising said polymer has a Gel Progression Index in the range of about 0.3 to about 10 at 120°F.
4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein a laboratory prepared sample of said fluid comprising said polymer has a Gel Progression Index in the range of about 0.3 to about 7 at 120°F.
5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein a laboratory prepared sample of said fluid comprising said polymer has a Gel Progression Index in the range of about 0.6 to about 2 at 120°F.
6. Canceled.
7. Canceled.
8. Canceled.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said improved suspension characteristics are obtained without the addition of organoclays to said drilling fluid.
10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said polymer enhances fluid loss control without the addition of a fluid loss control additive.
11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said polymer provides filtration control to the drilling fluid without the addition of a filtration control additive.
12. (Previously presented) A method for improving suspension characteristics of a drilling fluid, said method comprising adding to said drilling fluid a substantially linear polymer comprising mostly polar hydrophobic monomers and a smaller amount of hydrophilic monomers, and wherein said polymer comprises vinyl neodecanoate, such that said drilling fluid shows progressive gel behavior.
13. Canceled.
14. Canceled.
15. Canceled.
16. (Previously presented) A method of drilling in a subterranean formation comprising: drilling a borehole in said subterranean formation and employing in said drilling a synthetic invert emulsion based drilling fluid that uses a polymer comprising mostly polar hydrophobic monomers and a smaller amount of hydrophilic monomers, wherein said polymer comprises vinyl neodecanoate, to provide said drilling fluid with suspension characteristics for suspending

- weighting agent, and wherein said drilling fluid can demonstrate progressive gel behavior.
17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein said polymer also imparts fluid loss control to said drilling fluid.
  18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein said drilling fluid is formulated without the addition of organophilic clays.
  19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein a laboratory prepared sample of said drilling fluid has a Stress Build Index in the range of about 1 to about 2 at 120°F.
  20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein a laboratory prepared sample of said drilling fluid has a Gel Progression Index in the range of about 0.6 to about 2 at 120°F.
  21. Canceled.
  22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein said polymer also imparts filtration control to said drilling fluid.
  23. Canceled.
  24. Canceled.
  25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein said polymer further provides said drilling fluid with suspension characteristics for suspending drill cuttings.
  26. Canceled.
  27. Canceled.
  28. Canceled.

29. (Previously presented) The drilling fluid of claim 30 wherein said polymer contains about 40 to about 99% by weight C<sub>6-10</sub> alkyl acrylate.
30. (Previously presented) A drilling fluid consisting essentially of:
  - a synthetic fluid invert emulsion base;
  - water or brine;
  - at least one emulsifier;
  - weighting agent; and
  - a substantially linear polymer comprising mostly polar hydrophobic monomers and a smaller amount of hydrophilic monomers wherein said polymer contains vinyl neodecanoate.
31. (Previously presented) The drilling fluid of claim 30 wherein said polymer contains at least about 0.1% acrylic acid.
32. (Previously presented) A method for drilling in a subterranean hydrocarbon bearing formation, said method comprising drilling a borehole in said formation and employing in said drilling a drilling fluid consisting essentially of:
  - a synthetic fluid invert emulsion base;
  - water or brine;
  - at least one emulsifier;
  - weighting agent; and
  - a substantially linear polymer comprising mostly polar hydrophobic monomers and a smaller amount of hydrophilic monomers wherein said polymer contains vinyl neodecanoate.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32 further comprising at least one step from the group consisting of:  
  
completing said wellbore; and  
  
producing fluid from said wellbore.
34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33 wherein said step of completing said wellbore comprises cementing and casing said wellbore.
35. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33 wherein said step of completing said wellbore comprises gravel packing said wellbore.
36. Canceled.
37. Canceled.
38. Canceled.
39. Canceled.